

## **Priority Placement Program (PPP)**

**Q1** When are employees, who will be Separated or Changed to Lower Grade as a result of RIF, able to register on PPP?

**Answer:** Mandatory PPP registration is scheduled upon receipt of RIF notice.

**Q2** Can an adversely affected employee register early for the Priority Placement Program (PPP)?

**Answer:** The following conditions need to be met before early PPP registration can be authorized:

- a. Employees may not register unless they are scheduled to be adversely affected by RIF, or by declination of reassignment or Transfer of Function (TOF) outside the commuting area;
- b. The referral priority of each individual must be determined;
- c. The timing may not conflict with any registration dates set by a higher headquarters within the component, e.g., those contained in the approved reduction or realignment plan; and
- d. Registration must be offered to all similarly affected employees."

With our A76 situation and all the "unknown factors" involved, it appears that this would not be an option for USAG. We would be unable to meet conditions "a" or "b" until a determination as to the A76 impact on affected employees is determined.

Additionally, the initial CA decision could be overturned during the subsequent 4-6 month appeal period. Also, during the 4-6 month window, Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) candidates are identified and made offers for retirement. Once decisions are rendered on the appeals, the formal RIF occurs two-to three months later, so the list of eligible PPP candidates can not be locked-down until appeals are exhausted, VERA candidates are confirmed and the RIF is executed. Therefore, PPP registration cannot occur until the start of the RIF process, right after RIF letters are issued to employees. It should be noted that if there were "no" protests to the Government Accounting Office (GAO), then the appeal window would last approximately two months.

**Q3** What is our PPP Zone; can an employee expand or restrict the zone at initial registration?

**Answer:** PPP Zone for Fort Detrick US Army Garrison is Zone 1, which includes the states of NY, PA, WV, MD, VA, DE, NJ, CT, RI, MA, NH, VT, and ME. The action being taken such as separation or change to lower grade, etc. determines the area that can be considered for PPP registration. An employee scheduled for a change-to-lower grade-RIF action is restricted to DOD activities within their commuting area, whereas employees with separation notices due to RIF may register within their zone for the minimum number of activities nearest their duty station likely to provide a reasonable opportunity for placement and initial area of referral must include the registering activity if the employee is located in the commuting area of that activity. Activities in an adjoining zone that are no more distant from the employee's duty station than the furthestmost activity selected in the zone may also be included in the initial area of referral without prior PPP CARE office approval. Registration outside the employee's commuting area is voluntary. Subsequent declination of a valid offer outside the commuting area, which does not terminate severance pay entitlements, will make the employee a mandatory registrant for the commuting area. Anyone eligible for severance pay entitlements due to a RIF is a mandatory registrant in PPP.

Individuals who register only for activities within their commuting area may not expand their area of referral after separation without prior approval from the PPP Care Office.

**Q4** How long can an employee stay on PPP list?

**Answer:** Until placed, decline a valid offer, or 12 months after the effective date of separation from the permanent position, whichever occurs first. If a position is offered to them that is lower than the grade level they were being separated from, they could then be registered in the Retained Grade "R" program if they meet all the requirements for retained grade/pay entitlements. The DOD Retained Grade Placement Program includes those employees who had placement into a position that was lower than their full entitlements. The intent of this program is to continue to look for job matches to provide the employee with a position comparable to the grade from which they were displaced. Therefore, if an employee accepts a job at a lower grade, he/she stays on the PPP list for an additional year past the PPP hire date to be considered for vacancies at higher or employee's current grade prior to the RIF.

**Q5** Can Command request a PPP expert to visit Ft. Detrick and brief employees?

**Answer:** Command is exploring the possibility of bringing a PPP expert on-site for a briefing as well as a question and answer session.

**Q6** What is the Priority Placement Program? How does it work?

**Answer:** This is an automated DOD employee placement program to assist employees facing separation or downgrading resulting from Reductions In Force.

**Q7** If I am offered a job in another location, will I have to pay the moving costs or will I be allowed relocation expenses?

**Answer:** Employees placed through PPP outside their commuting area entitled to Permanent Change of Station (PCS) allowances as outlined in the Joint Travel Regulations.

**Q8** What distance is specified before it is considered relocation?

**Answer:** Ordinarily, a relocation of residence would not be considered as incident to a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) unless the one-way commuting distance from the old residence to the new duty station is at least 10 miles greater than from the old residence to the old duty station. Even then, circumstances surrounding a particular case, for example relative commuting time, may suggest that the relocation of residence was not incident to the transfer.

**Q9** What happens to my rights in the PPP if I refuse to take a job offered in another state?

**Answer:** A position offered outside your commuting area or outside the area for which you register is not a valid job offer for the purpose of grade and pay retention entitlement, or severance pay entitlements. Details of the PPP will be covered in the counseling sessions, which will be offered to all persons receiving RIF notices.